AmigaMCCC News
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X-Amiga

Hope you survived the holidays. Mine was particularly busy, which kept me from the meeting and seriously bit into my "Amiga Time." Fortunately, I see an end to the major projects that have been hanging over my head at work for the past couple of years hopefully allowing me to get my concentration back at least. Anyhow, I promised that I would get this new X-Amiga installed on one of my boxes and give a review on it. Well, I'm still not where I want to be on this subject but I have made a start. First, a bit of explanation about this X-Amiga, It is an Amiga emulator that runs on the X86 wintel platform, Unlike UAE or one of its many variants, you do not need a full blown Macintosh, Linux, or Windoze system running to allow this one Amiga emulator to run within that environment. It is not like AROS either. AROS is a complete Amiga rewrite and to get programs to run in it you have to write and compile programs just for AROS. The great 68k Amiga software library will not run on it unless you run a version of UAE made just for AROS. Several people are working on a JIT (just in time) compiler that will translate 68k code into X86 code on the fly that will allow us to run old Amiga programs within AROS but that appears to be quite a ways off yet. So the closest thing I can say X-Amiga is to, is Amithlon – and that is where the excitement lies.

Amithlon was one of the greatest products the Amiga world has seen. It was awesome!. Just put the disk in your PC (provided you had the right hardware), boot, and you were running an "Amiga." Most programs ran and the speed was unreal for an emulator. This was possible because Amithlon ran on a minimal Linux core to handle the hardware and JIT and the Amiga stuff ran on top of that. The whole package was remarkably well written and stable. A true testament to the coding abilities of Bernie Meyer. Unfortunately Mr. Meyer and company had a falling out and the product was soon unsupported. As time has gone by and hardware changed, I find myself unable to run Amithlon on my newer hardware and this is why I am holding so much hope for this new X-Amiga.

Pros and Cons

As good as Amithlon was, I was never able to get it to run on any laptop I owned. Support was for a very limited number of graphics cards and few of those found themselves on laptops. I'm happy to say that I've had good luck so far on getting X-Amiga to boot on a lot of different hardware, especially laptops. The bad news is that, unlike Amithlon, there are no Amiga ROMs or operating system. You have to supply that. It also means that once you're booted up all you have is a very limited Amiga-sorta looking environment that will allow you to install X-Amiga and little else. Which brings us to the second downer, the install process. All I can say is that this is a work in progress. You're probably better off just skipping the GUI install and going with the CLI prompt install. The instructions are incomplete and at times contradictory. They say that you need a Linux partition of the type 83. You go to the partitioning tool and they will give you 60 different options some of them Linux but they don't give you any numbers. So this "normal" Linux partition 83 is really called the ext2 file system. Eric got into a bit of trouble when he used a new Linux system to format his disk. Ext3 file system is the new darling of the Linux world and is the default for formatting, but how is Eric supposed to know that? Anyhow, this stuff is what needs to be addressed in the documentation or just taken care of in an install script. The rest of the install was just as cryptic. Directories were made for boot and system files. Or were they asking for the paths to find the ROMs and system files? By the way, you should be fairly fluent in the Linux system directory structure to keep from completely botching it up. Later in the install you are giving the option of using the grub boot loader to boot your system up. Grub seems to be one of those simple things that is hard for people to get right. I've seen some real horror shows that were passed off as boot scripts. Fortunately, I'm starting to get good at figuring them out. Bottom line: great concept that needs some working out. I believe I have something installed on that disk but I have not tried to boot it yet. It is asking for a complete Amiga installed environment. I haven't found the one I backed up to a CD yet. I'm going to see if I can use the emergency setup that came on the Amiga 3.5 install disk for now. If you want to give this X-Amiga thing a shot, it would be more helpful to be a Linux user than an Ami user. This is quite a bit different from the Amikit setup for the Windoze platform which was a joy to install, but more on that later.

…by James Lawrence
from the AmiTech-Dayton Gazette, January 2008

Amiga OS 5 Surfaces

AmigaOS 5 made a covert appearance at an event outside the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), turning up in the guise of a version of Space Invaders running on a Windows Mobile 6-based smartphone.

Amiga — the company — was ostensibly showing AmigaAnywhere 2, the new version of its virtual machine technology. But taking Amiga President Bill McEwen aside for a moment, we discovered that AmigaAnywhere 2 is AmigaOS 5.

"We had to call it that because of the Microsoft deal," McEwen whispered. Amiga's had close-ish ties with Redmond since 2002 at least when it began pitching the original AmigaAnywhere for Windows CE.

Microsoft is publishing Invasion for WM6 but apparently it doesn't like the idea of telling the world that one of its operating systems is being — albeit temporarily — elbowed aside by another OS, but, according to McEwen, that's what's happening when Invaders runs. Fire up the app and Windows Mobile disappears, up pops the AmigaAnywhere logo and then the game loads.

Incidentally, Amiga itself has been for years been offering a version of Invasion for Pocket PC, which begs the question: is there really anything different with AmigaAnywhere 2? For Amiga's part, AmigaAnywhere 2 is pitched as a "device-independent, single, ubiquitous Virtual Environment that functions across different operating systems and the internet." Of course, it's been pursuing this approach for most of the past seven years, and it's hard to see what AmigaAnywhere does that Java doesn't. Or Flash — perhaps a better comparison given the Amiga focus on rich media.

The point for AmigaOS buffs is that AmigaAnywhere 2 effectively starts up a virtual machine, boots AmigaOS and runs the code on top of that. And that makes it perfectly possible for Amiga lovers to fire it up and run the familiar Amiga GUI instead of the game. Why they'd want to is anyone's guess, and Amiga wasn't demo-ing the OS working in this mode. Can AmigaOS catch up with the user experience and the functionality of modern operating systems? Some might argue that it shouldn't try, that it should instead revel in its simplicity and very small storage requirement.

AmigaMCCC News

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February Calendar

February 13 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:00 pm — **South** Grand Prairie Public Library
760 Bardin Road, Grand Prairie
Note: Wednesday meeting at South GP Library

February 13— MCCC Board of Director's Meeting
Approx. 9:15 pm — Location TBD

February 23 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am